

Letter from the Director

The winds of change continue to blow since September 11, 2001. Public healthcare will never be the same. This year has seen many changes related to 9/11, events and accomplishments.

The largest and most obvious change occurred to this author. There was a comprehensive restructuring of the Mississippi Department of Health organizational structure. Mr. Jim Craig, the State EMS Director for the past four years, was promoted to Director of Health Protection. I was previously the Director of Trauma System Development and Injury Control in the Bureau of EMS. Subsequent to Mr. Craig's promotion, I was given the opportunity to serve as the State's new EMS Director on March 1, 2004.

Other major events that occurred during this fiscal year include:

- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) conducted a "Reassessment of Emergency Medical Services"
- Continued Trauma Care Center Educational/Consultative Visits
- Revised Trauma Care Regulations
- Implemented the EMS/EMSC/Trauma Web Sites

In April 2004, the Mississippi EMS System was tested by a derailment of "The City of New Orleans" Amtrak train in Yazoo County. Nearly 100 passengers were injured and over 20 ambulances responded to assist with transporting patients to local hospitals.

In FY'04, \$7,510,172 was distributed to trauma centers and eligible physicians for uncompensated care reimbursement. The EMS Operating Fund disbursed \$1,711,221 to 52 counties for enhancement to EMS services.

Finally, in January 2004, BEMS conducted an "EMS Bioterrorism Needs Assessment" of all EMS Providers in the state. This assessment concluded the need for EMS Bioterrorism Awareness Training and pertinent equipment. Additionally, BEMS conducted an "Assessment, by County, of Paramedic Coverage in Mississippi." This assessment demonstrated a possible misalignment of paramedic coverage in the state.

As I began this letter discussing changes, I can feel the winds of change blowing again. This coming year will bring more and greater changes to BEMS. Our responsibilities will grow as will our staff. We will continue to enhance our EMS/Trauma System to remain the National model it has become.

I cannot conclude this letter without pausing to thank my friend and mentor, Jim Craig. Without Jim's patience and continuing assistance, I would not be in the position to write this letter.

I look forward to working with all of you, continuing to improve our EMS and Trauma System.

Sincerely,



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Table of Contents

I	Overview of the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services	
A.	History	1
1.	Certification, Education, & Testing	1
2.	Licensure and System Evaluation	2
3.	Trauma System Development and Injury Control	2
B.	Funding	5
C.	EMS/Trauma Regulation Development Process	7
D.	Organizational Charts	9
II	The Bureau of EMS	
A.	Mission Statement	10
B.	Introduction	10
C.	Mississippi EMS Providers	10
1.	EMS Personnel Training	11
2.	Provider Education	12
D.	Level of Ambulance Service Licensure	13
1.	Ground Ambulance Services	13
2.	Air Ambulance Services	14
E.	Compliance	16
F.	Mississippi Emergency Medical Services Information System	17
G.	Automated External Defibrillator Program	25
H.	EMS Rural Paramedic Scholarship Program	27
I.	Future Initiatives	28
III	Division of Trauma System Development and Injury Control	
A.	Mission Statement	30
B.	Trauma Care System in Review	30
1.	Timeline-History of the Trauma Care System	32
C.	Mississippi Legislative History	33
D.	Trauma Care Regions	34
E.	Hospital Status System	35
F.	Trauma Center Designation Levels	35
1.	Trauma Center Application Process	36
2.	Trauma Center Inspection Process	36
3.	Length of Trauma Center Designation	38
4.	Trauma Center Renewal	39
5.	Process of Appeal for Failing Trauma Center Inspection	39
6.	Categories of Trauma Center Designation	39
7.	Revocation of Trauma Center Designation	40
G.	Educational Consultative Visits	40
H.	Trauma Centers and Regional Maps	41
I.	Mississippi Trauma Advisory Council (MTAC)	45
1.	MTAC Regulation Sub-Committee	46
J.	Mississippi Trauma Registry Committee	46

K. Continuing Education Opportunities	46
L. Mississippi Emergency Medical Services for Children	47
M. Trauma Registry Review	48
1. Utilization of Trauma Registry	49
2. Inclusion Criteria	49
3. Inclusion Requirements after prerequisite	50
4. Trauma Registry Training Workshops	51
5. Trauma Registry Data	53
N. Trauma Care Trust Fund Report	58
O. Future Initiatives	61
P. Appendices	